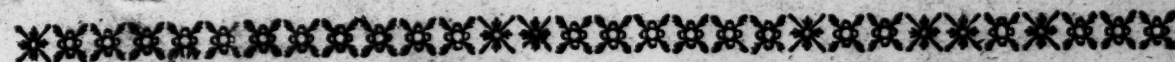


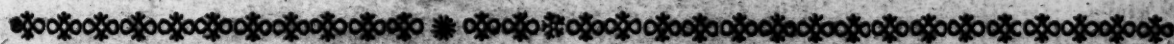
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T H E
BRISTOL INFIRMARY
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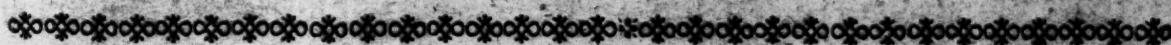


I N A
S E R M O N,
P R E A C H ' D before the
S U B S C R I B E R S,

A T T H E
PARISH CHURCH of St. *James's*, JULY 12, 1757,
And printed at their particular Request.



By the Hon. and Rev. JOHN AYLMER,
PREBENDARY of BRISTOL.




B R I S T O L :

Printed for THOMAS CADELL, in *Wine Street*, 1757.



LUKE, Chap. x. Verse 37.

Then said JESUS unto him, go, and do thou likewise.


 AM now going to offer to your Consideration, in order to recommend to your Assistance, a Work so excellent in it's own Nature, so beneficial to Society, so acceptable to the Almighty, and so conformable to the Duty of all, who profess to walk either by the Dictates of Nature, or the Light of the Gospel, that one wou'd think it were sufficient plainly and simply to declare to you, who now hear me, that my Business at this Time is to call upon you to unite in the Support of an Institution, the sole End of which is to promote the Honour of the supream Being, and the Comfort and Relief of those whom Poverty, attended with Sicknes, render the Subject of compleat human Misery, and the just Object of human Benevolence : A Work to which no well-grounded Objection can be raised, nor any sufficient Reason offer'd, why all,

B who

who live within the Reach of it, shou'd not unite in the Support of ; for tho' we may differ from each other in the Nature, and Rites, of Sacrifice to God, yet we may all join in shewing Mercy to Man ; there is (thank God) still left this Bond of Society, that all Religions in general, and the different Divisions of each, may meet together to do good. Among all the various Systems of Religion with which the World abounds, I have heard of none which need prevent their joining with each other in Acts of Benevolence towards immediate Objects of Distress, therefore the most of what I shall now say, will be as applicable to any other Congregation as to this ; and with this View I have taken for my Text the Conclusion of one of those excellent Parables of our Saviour, the Tendency of which is so evidently to promote the general Good of Mankind that the Wisdom and Goodness, at least, if not the Authority and Divine Mission, of the Teacher, must be universally acknowledg'd by all, whose Faith doth not enjoin a cruel Disregard to the Miseries of their fellow Creatures ; and there is no Religion but will disavow such an unnatural Law. The good Samaritan to us is well known, and justly admir'd ; for tho' he was by false Principles, instill'd into him by his Education,

cation, an Enemy to the Jews, as a Body, the natural Goodness of his Heart taught him, that no Difference in Religion cou'd authorise, much less countenance, his Neglect of the universal Duty of Compassion, even to a Jew who stood in need of it ; and we may with Justice call upon all others as well as ourselves, to attend to the Morality of this History ; *and to go, and do likewise.*

I SHALL consider some of the various Motives we have to preserve, and to promote the good Work, which is now the Object of our Thoughts, viz. the INFIRMARY, which is kept up in this City by general Contribution ; the Design of which is, in short, at the voluntary Expence of the Public, to deliver Poverty wherever they meet with it, or wherever it offers itself (as far as their Fund will enable them) from the additional grievous, and often insupportable Load of Sicknes and Pain ; and which often, without some such Refuge, the Poor must, and do, daily sink under. I shall

FIRST, call upon those, (if any such there are who now hear me) who do not acknowledge that God ever did reveal his Will to Mankind ; but yet ac-

knowledge the Being and Moral Government of God: Let them consider the Fitness of such a Regard to such united Misery, as Poverty and Pain. Let them reflect that from the Nature of the Deity, whose Works sufficiently teach us his Goodness, as well as his Wisdom, and Power, it is evident, there can be no partial Respect of Persons with Him; but that the Poor are equally the Object of his Fatherly Kindness and Care, with the Rich; and it is not consistent with Reason therefore that Provision shou'd not be made for the Support of one, as well as the other; and if sufficient Means for their Support doth appear any Ways to be attainable, that in all Reason ought to be look'd upon as the Provision design'd by God: For how (independent of Revelation) do we judge that any Means in the natural World were calculated to bring about any particular End? But by the peculiar, and distinct Fitness they evidently have to produce such Effect: Thus, how do we judge that Food was calculated for the Support of our Being, and not for our Pleasure only; but because by Experience we find it is peculiarly fit indeed for both Ends; but distinctly necessary for our Support only, and not for our Pleasure: The Want of it is fatal to our Being; tho' cou'd we exist without it, our Pleasure wou'd

wou'd have various Sources still left. So it wou'd be highly abfur'd, and unbecoming a reasonable Man to suppose that Riches are bestow'd upon one Man merely to sport and play with ; whilst another, every whit as good as himself, lies languishing at his Door for want of the necessary Support of his Being; such a Constitution of Things is at first Sight apparently unworthy of the Goodness, as well as Wisdom, of the great Author of Nature; and inconsistent also with that Wisdom, and Goodness, which so abundantly, and so evidently, appear thro' every other Part of the Constitution of Nature; and therefore no thinking Man can rest in so absurd a Supposition; but let this rich Man out of his Abundance supply the Necessity of the other, he need not curtail himself of any rational Pleasure by so doing; and you then see the Designs of Providence fully, and sufficiently, answered; and a noble End effected, which, according to the natural Constitution of the Course of this World, cou'd be effected no other Way ; which sufficiently points out the End of Riches, and the Use we are to make of them; and as there is always some natural Inclination implanted in us to induce us to pursue those Ends, which Reason points out; so in the Case before us, Compassion,

passion, that Council which naturally pleads with our Hearts for the distress'd, is implanted in us to draw us with the Cords of a Man towards the effecting that good, and necessary End, which Reason plainly points out the Necessity of, and the Means to effect it; Compassion being as natural, tho' not so strong, a Sensation as Hunger. Thus even those who acknowledge no reveal'd Law, are a plain and evident Law to themselves in this Respect. Upon this Foundation therefore I may well build the Hopes of being heard in recommending our INFIRMARY to your Care and Support, as it is one of the best Methods of executing our Part in the Designs of Providence; as we do hereby assist, and (as far as human Power can reach) relieve Poverty in the worst Circumstances, and from it's severest Burden, Sicknes, and Pain; and there are many excellent Reasons that ought to recommend this particular Method of fulfilling our Obligations before mention'd. I shall just point out some of the Chief.

AND I. It gives us a Power of doing that Good, which we might not be able to arrive at in any other Method. Some of us are so involv'd in Business, and have so little Leisure from it, that both
Time

Time and Opportunities are wanting to find out Objects most fit to exercise this Duty upon; and if they do offer themselves, to examine their Fitness; and when we are convinc'd of that; to pursue the proper Methods to effect their Relief, to which in the Case under Consideration, viz. that of Pain, and Sickness, (the most pitiable sure of all Cases of Poverty) Care, Time, and Attendance are necessary, which in some Situations of Life, as that of Business, may be highly inconvenient; as the Neglect of our own Affairs in many Cases may be ruinous to ourselves, and Dependants; and it may be also to no purpose; as there are few of us capable of pursuing the right Means for obtaining the End we aim at, for Want of the necessary Skill, which obliges us to have Recourse to others, the very Method which here offers itself.

II. IF we happen to have leasure to seek out ourselves for suitable Help, it might be insufficient; there being many Cases wherein the united Skill, and Counsel of many of the ablest of the Profession may be no more than necessary; and this may not be so easy a Task for many to compass, were they in Circumstances to bear the great Charge of it; there

there being few Fortunes sufficient for many such Cases ; now Here that Difficulty is remov'd ; and a Person need be in no very affluent Circumstances ; and yet (for a small annual Charge) may have a Right to place such unhappy fellow Creatures under the Care of the ablest Gentlemen of the Profession in this great City, united together for this good End ; and the Patients at the same Time provided with the convenient Necessaries to comfort, and support them, under their Sufferings.

III. THOSE, who are not in the Way of being annual Benefactors to, and the constant Support of, this merciful and useful Work, have an Opportunity of shewing their Love to Mankind, their Feeling for their Miseries of the helpless Part of it, and their Obedience to this great Law of Nature, by making the right Use of the Opportunity which now offers itself, and to which there can in Reason lie no Objection ; as they must be sensible they have just Cause to expect the best Fruit from the Seed they thus sow ; since so many prudent, humane People, do continually meet to consult, and determine, upon the best Methods of employing this good Seed ; and do constantly look into the Use that is made of it.

IV. AGAIN,

IV. AGAIN, it is well worthy of Consideration to those whose Circumstances do not enable them at once to afford sufficient for the Relief of this joint Misery of the Poor, such, I mean, whose Overplus is small, and may not seasonable be able to collect a Number in the same Circumstances with themselves sufficient for a good Work of this Kind, yet a Number of such joint Hands will do much good. Here then offers one of the best Expedients for them to effect this, by assisting, as Time, and Occasion permits, in uniting to create a Treasure, which they must know, because they may at any Time see, will be employ'd to the best Advantage for the Purposes they intend, and which it is equally the Duty of every one to promote, who are not in real Want themselves.

LET us consider farther some other great, and essential Advantages which Society reaps from these admirable Institutions : I shall name two, both which are of infinite Weight.

I. THE preserving so many useful Lives ; for, as it is the laborious Part of Mankind whose Relief is here design'd, it is in Fact the promoting our own
C Benefit,

Benefit, and Convenience ; for they are as necessary to our Comfort, as we are to their Support ; it is by the Sweat of their Brows, and the indefatigable Labour they sustain, that the Landholder reaps the Benefit of his Professions, and the Merchant acquires his Wealth. It is well known that this Country has more Work of all Sorts than Hands to perform it ; and every Man must be sensible how often Sickness does, and must, prove fatal to this useful Order of Men, from the Want of common Conveniences, necessary Comforts, and suitable Care, and Assistance : So that I believe a Nation may be well paid for these Institutions by the Number of useful Hands it by this Means recovers, which otherwise wou'd be lost ; and as is often the Case, leave a Family behind them, which is a greater, and more lasting, Burden on the Country, than the Expence, which the reasonable, and just Care of the Father, or Support, of such a Family, may prove.

II. THE vast Benefit Society has already receiv'd and still continues to receive, from these Institutions in the wonderful Improvement, from their first Rise, which has been, and still continues to be, made in Physic and Surgery : A Benefit of which every Body
more

more or less partakes ; as the additional Knowledge and Experience these Hospitals have furnish'd ; and the great Facility with which others are enlighten'd by these Means, has render'd the Cure of numberless Complaints amazingly more easy, and expeditious than cou'd have been thought before. So that here we see Virtue holding out her own Reward to us. *He that bath Pity on the Poor lendeth to the LORD, and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again.*

To these Considerations ought to be join'd another of no small Weight, as it may have no inconsiderable Effect, viz. that the Persons, who are reliev'd by this excellent Institution, are not only sent away more useful, as being more able Members of Society : But also often, it is to be hop'd, more worthy Members ; as the good Lessons they hear, and Advice they receive, (very possibly sometimes the first they have receiv'd) may work on them all, undoubtedly will on some ; for Sickness, and Pain are wonderful Softeners of the Heart, and do strangely open, and dispose the Mind to receive Counsel ; but when good Advice comes Hand in Hand with Deliverance from Misery and Anguish,
it

it comes in such engaging Company, that it must be a harden'd Heart indeed, that can refuse it a favourable Reception, and a lasting, and affectionate Remembrance. Thus, I have in few Words, I think, shewn the Excellency of these Sort of Institutions from the Necessity, and the Usefulness of them; and in Consequence, the Reasonableness of supporting them does evidently appear, I think, to all. I have endeavour'd indeed to shew it to be plainly the Duty of all Men to unite in the Support of it; I say all Men in general; because to assist, and Support Poverty, and Distress, is plainly deducible from the Religion of Nature; a Law, wherever it appears clearly to us, equally obligatory to all Mankind; and no better Method of relieving the highest Misery of Poverty can be devis'd, I think, than these Sort of Institutions. Now if Reason, and natural Religion do so clearly, and so forcibly, plead for us on the Occasion now under Consideration; what Success may we not justly expect our Cause to meet with from those who profess to walk by the additional Light of the Gospel, where all the Motives, that have hitherto been offer'd, receive the additional Weight of a positive, and plain Command, and the excellent Example, both of our Saviour, and his Apostles.

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IN the first Place the positive Commands with regard to the Poor, and to the afflicted when separately met with, and much more when jointly seen, and consider'd in the afflicted Poor, are so numerous, and so clear, that they occur to and strike, the most cursory Reader in almost every Sentence. Every Disciple of our Saviour knows that our Duty to God, and our Love to our Neighbour are the two Foundation Stones of all Morality: The Necessity of complying with this Law of Love to our Neighbour is plainly declar'd: It is the Touchstone of our Sincerity in the Faith; *By this* (says our LORD) *shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another*; it will also be one of the main Points upon which our Tryal at the Day of Judgment is to turn; cloathing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, visiting the Sick, &c. being Conditions, the Observance of which is to be rewarded with that Sentence, (to use the Words of our LORD himself) *Come to me ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* The Neglect of these Conditions to receive that severe Penalty, (in the Words of our LORD) *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting Fire.* Who this Neighbour is, who is the Object of this great Duty, the Parable before us is a direct Declaration;

Declaration; the whole Parable being an Answer to this very Question, *And who is my Neighbour?* This our LORD clears up, *viz.* Every Man in Distress.

WE have likewise the best Example set before us in the Conduct of our Saviour and his Apostles: Their Miracles, by which both our Saviour himself, and his Apostles by his Direction, were to certify their Divine Mission, being almost all of them delivering the Poor from the additional Calamity of Pain, and Sicknes: A very just Motive this for you to assist, and support the good Work we recommend to you; and a very just Foundation for our Claim to your Assistance; especially when you reflect on another great Design which ought always to be consider'd, and attended to in, and may be mightily forwarded by, and reasonably hop'd from, these Institutions, *viz.* the Conversion of Unbelievers, and the Reformation of Sinners. In such a trading City as this where there is a Conflux of all Nations, and all Religions; and in such an INFIRMARY as this, which extends its Benevolence to all, without Distinction, who stand in need of it; it may, in the Course of it, it must, shelter some who never heard the Name of CHRIST before; but Numbers, I fear, who never
heard

heard Instruction, and Advice before ; and we know that all this is never receiv'd (as I have said before) with more Willingness, and more Complacency, and with more Partiality, and Favour, than at the Time in which, and from the Person, by whom, we are deliver'd from Pain and Misery.

THUS I have set before your Eyes the good Work you are call'd upon to assist, and to promote : I have endeavour'd to shew that it is in its own Nature excellent, and in its Effects useful to Society, not only to those who meet with Relief from it, but also to those likewise, who help to support it ; that it is incumbent on Society in general, and therefore on each Individual in particular, to promote these Institutions, in Point of Duty, Humanity, and even Interest ; but more especially we Christians are in a particular Manner call'd upon, as we are more clearly taught, and more strictly enjoyn'd, and more pathetically persuaded, to set an Example in every good Work ; of which the Institution before us is certainly one of the best. As there can in Reason no Objection be made to it, there can be no Excuse for our not endeavouring zealously to support it. Here is a good, because it is a sure Test of the Sincerity

cerity of our Faith. This Sort of Work was the constant Employment of our great Master; and if we do not shew the same Temper, it is in vain we are call'd by the same Name; for as the Apostle tells you, *If ye have not the Spirit of CHRIST, ye are none of his.* And here, if Time wou'd permit, I shou'd point out some Reasons to persuade those, who by their Situation in Life have Leisure sufficient, and ought to set an Example, to take the Care of these excellent Works upon themselves; as there is no Employment more befitting Men, who by their happy Circumstances in Life are blest'd both with Leisure, and Means, to be thus useful to Mankind in this World, and to themselves in the next: Indeed the Reasons are so obvious, and the Work redounds so much to their Praise here, as well as hereafter, that thus mentioning it is almost sufficient.

LET us therefore unite in employing those several Abilities we may have; and let it not be said that this rich City shou'd be more inferior to *London* in good Works, than in Wealth; as that City will naturally exceed you in the Number of these Institutions; let this one of yours at least equal any one they can boast of; for you are certainly well able
to

to do it; and in order to the better Support of it, let us shew a Desire, and Willingness to meet together with all those, who in this City are of different Opinions. Such a friendly Meeting at Times is becoming all Opinions, but especially on so excellent an Occasion; that it may appear that Righteousness, Love, and Mercy is what we all approve, and aim at. What Place so fit for such a general Meeting as this Refuge for Misery? I cannot but imagine that such a general Consultation, as it were for, and general Care of, the afflicted Poor wou'd be an universal Sacrifice as acceptable, and well pleasing to God, as agreeable to every good and pious Heart; and let us imagine we hear the Cries of our Brethren labouring under Poverty, and Pain, offering themselves as Mediators of, and imploring, such a Union, and as it were assembled at the Door to wait such a happy Issue, upon which their Hopes of Comfort depend; and quickening our Resolutions to unite for their speedy Relief, by the Cries of Anguish, *Have Mercy on us!*

F I N I S.

THE following Account of the present STATE of the
 BRISTOL INFIRMARY, was reported by Mr.
 FISHER, to the Subscribers, at their General Anniversary
 Meeting, held at the *Merchant-Tailors Hall*, July 12, 1757,
 which shews the Necessity the Society are under of applying
 to the Publick for their Assistance, to maintain an Under-
 taking in which they are so nearly interested.

	l.	s.	d.
Expended the first Half Year	—	1138	14 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
And the last estimated as the former		1138	14 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Gratuities payable at Christmas	—	55	0 0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1193	14 0 $\frac{1}{2}$

In the Hands of the Matron	19	11	10
77 Subscribers not receiv'd	161	0	0
Dividend on Stock	—	288	15 0
Rents due at Christmas		30	0 0
Apothecary's Apprentices Board		15	0 0
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		514	6 10
Deficiency to be made good		679	7 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		1193	14 0 $\frac{1}{2}$

In-Patients admitted from the 1st of January,
 to the 12th of July, 1757, of which Number } 693
 94 are Casualties
 Refused Admission for want of Room 204
 Out-Patients admitted from the 1st of January to } 1513
 the 12th of July,

